

## CHAPTER 2

### ALTERNATIVES

A range of possible choices for resolving planning issues is examined in the planning process. These choices are consolidated into a number of complete resource management plan alternatives for consideration.

This chapter discusses BLM's general resource management guidelines and the multiple use and transfer area designations used in describing alternative plans. Then the alternatives eliminated from consideration for the Monument RMP are presented. The last section of this chapter describes the alternatives considered in detail for the Monument RMP.

### RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The following statewide guidelines direct BLM management on public lands in Idaho.

#### Air Quality

Under the Clean Air Act (as amended, 1977), BLM-administered lands were given Class II air quality classification, which allows moderate deterioration associated with moderate, well-controlled industrial and population growth. BLM will manage all public lands as Class II unless they are reclassified by the State as a result of the procedures prescribed in the Clean Air Act (as amended, 1977). Administrative actions on the public lands will comply with the air quality classification for that specific area.

#### Allowable Uses

The public lands will be managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield as required by FLPMA. Any valid use, occupancy, and development of the public lands, including but not limited to, those requiring rights-of-way, leases, and licenses will be considered, subject to applicable

*Resource Management Guidelines*  
*Allowable Uses*

environmental review procedures, unless specifically excluded in the plan. In some areas, however, environmental values, hazards, or manageability considerations may require limitations on either the type or intensity of use, or both. Those limitations are identified in the plan's land use allocations and management objectives for specific areas within the public lands. BLM will include stipulations and special conditions as necessary in leases, licenses, and permits to ensure the protection and preservation of resources.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs) are established through the planning process as provided in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act for "...areas within the public lands where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards." Management is tailored to the specific needs of each ACEC.

Coordination With Other Agencies, State and Local Governments, and Indian Tribes

BLM will coordinate its review of detailed management plans and individual projects prepared in conjunction with the RMP to ensure consistency with officially adopted and approved plans, policies, and programs of other agencies, State and local governments, and Indian tribes. Cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding will be developed, as necessary, to promote close cooperation between BLM and other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and Indian tribes.

Cultural Resources

BLM will manage cultural resources so that representative samples of the full array of scientific and socio-cultural values are maintained or enhanced consistent with State and Federal laws.

### Detailed Management Plans

The RMP provides general guidance for the resource area. More detailed management plans, called activity plans, will be prepared to deal with areas where a greater level of detail is required. Activity plans will indicate specific management practices, improvements, allocations, and other information for a particular site or area. They will be prepared for most major BLM programs such as range (allotment management plans), recreation (recreation area management plans), wildlife (habitat management plans), and cultural resources (cultural resources activity plans.). Where two or more activities have activity plan needs in the same general area, a single consolidated activity plan may be prepared. Coordination, consultation, and public involvement are integral parts in the formulation of activity plans.

### Economic and Social Considerations

BLM will ensure that any management action undertaken in connection with this plan is cost-effective and takes into account local social and economic factors. Cost-effectiveness may be determined by any method deemed appropriate by the Bureau for the specific management action involved.

### Environmental Reviews

The NEPA process will be conducted on all projects prior to approval. This site-specific analysis will allow some projects to be considered under provisions of the categorical review process and others to be considered under the environmental assessment process.

### Fish and Wildlife

BLM will manage fish and wildlife habitat on the public lands. A variety of methods may be employed, including management actions designed to maintain or improve wildlife habitat, inclusion of stipulations or conditions in BLM leases, licenses, and permits, and development of detailed plans for fish and wildlife habitat management. Priority will be given to habitat for listed and candidate threatened and endangered species and sensitive species. If any listed or candidate threatened or endangered species may be affected by BLM actions, the Fish and Wildlife Service will be consulted as prescribed by the Endangered Species Act.

*Resource Management Guidelines*  
*Fish and Wildlife*

Riparian and wetlands habitat have a high priority for protection and improvement in accordance with National policy. All BLM management actions will comply with Federal and State laws concerning fish and wildlife.

Geology, Energy, and Minerals

Geology, Energy, and Minerals Management

BLM will manage geological, energy, and minerals resources on the public lands. Geological resources will be managed so that significant scientific, recreational, and educational values will be maintained or enhanced. Generally, the public lands are available for mineral exploration and development, subject to applicable regulations and Federal and State laws.

Location of Mining Claims

Location of mining claims in accordance with the State and Federal mining laws and regulations is nondiscretionary. The public lands are available for location of mining claims unless withdrawn. Recommendations by BLM for withdrawal are subject to final consideration by the Secretary of the Department of the Interior.

Leasing and Sale

Energy and minerals leasing and mineral materials sale is discretionary. Approval of an application for lease or sale is subject to *environmental review in the NEPA process* and may include stipulations to protect other resources. Generally, the public lands may be considered for energy and minerals leasing and sale.

*The entire Monument Planning Area will be open to mineral leasing. Some stipulations have been identified in the Monument RMP and are identified in the management prescriptions for multiple use areas, where applicable, in each alternative.*

### Land Tenure Adjustment

The public lands will be retained in Federal ownership and managed by BLM according to the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, except those lands specifically identified in the plan or amendment as transfer areas. Transfer areas are those public land identified through the planning process which are available for transfer from Federal ownership.

Transfer of public land within a transfer area may be accomplished by any means authorized by law. Final transfer from BLM jurisdiction, however, is subject to a decision by the authorized officer, based on detailed analysis and such documentation as prescribed by law or regulation.

Mineral in character lands will not be identified as transfer areas.

Wilderness study areas (WSAs) and designated wilderness areas will not be identified as transfer areas.

Lands may be acquired by BLM as authorized by law, but only within retention areas (multiple use areas). Objectives for acquiring lands in connection with BLM programs may be established in the RMP.

BLM will manage transfer areas until transfer of title occurs. Management actions will be taken as necessary to meet resource or user needs. Public investments in transfer areas will be kept to a minimum.

All lands classifications, including those made under the Classification and Multiple Use Act of September 19, 1964 (43 U.S.C. 1411-18), will be reviewed in the planning process to determine if they are still appropriate. Review will consider whether the classifications are necessary to meet management objectives established in the RMP and whether the land is being used for the purpose classified. Classifications will be cancelled unless they are necessary to implement the RMP decisions.

### Motorized Vehicle Access and Use

Through the planning process, public lands are placed in one of three categories for purposes of controlling motorized vehicle access: open, limited, and closed. Guidelines for these categories are as follows:

1. Open. Motorized vehicles may travel anywhere.
2. Limited. Motorized vehicles are permitted, subject to specified conditions such as seasonal limitations, speed limits, and designated routes of travel as developed during subsequent activity planning.
3. Closed. Motorized vehicles are prohibited.

### Public Utilities

Generally, public lands may be considered for the installation of public utilities, except where expressly closed by law or regulation. Project approval will be subject to preparation of an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. BLM will work closely with Idaho Public Utilities Commission, other State and Federal agencies, local governments, utility companies, and other interested parties to determine appropriate locations and environmental safeguards for public utilities involving public lands.

In the Monument Planning Area, rights-of-way in common will be used whenever possible. Proposed utility developments identified by the public utility industries follow existing right-of-way routes very well. Because of the lack of resource conflicts, utility corridors were not identified as an issue for the Monument RMP and no corridors have been established. Utility developments would be prohibited in wilderness study areas (WSAs) recommended suitable for designation.

### Rangeland Management

#### Grazing Preference

Within each grazing allotment or group of allotments, a grazing preference is established at a level that will ensure adequate forage is also available for wildlife. Sufficient vegetation is reserved for purposes of maintaining plant vigor, stabilizing soil, providing cover for wildlife, and other nonconsumptive uses.

Grazing decisions or agreements may be made for those allotments where adequate information exists. In the other allotments where there is inadequate information, an initial decision will be made which will outline a process and schedule for gathering the necessary information. An initial stocking rate will also be established, which may be adjusted upwards or downwards in the final decision as a result of monitoring. All grazing decisions will be issued in accordance with applicable BLM regulations.

#### Range Improvements, Grazing Systems, Other Range Management Practices

A variety of range improvements, grazing systems, and other range management practices may be considered in conjunction with livestock management on individual allotments. Such practices will be based on the range management

category (maintain, improve, custodial) in which the allotment has been placed and will be formulated in consultation, coordination, and cooperation with livestock operators, and other interested parties.

#### Wild Horses and Burros

Adopted animals will be monitored until title is transferred. Since no wild horse or burro populations exist in the planning area, reserving forage for maintenance of the populations is not necessary for the Monument RMP.

#### Recreation

##### Recreation Management

BLM will manage recreation on the public lands. A variety of means to maintain or improve recreation opportunities will be considered. Some areas may be subject to special restrictions to protect resources or eliminate or reduce conflicts among uses.

##### Recreation Facilities

BLM may develop and maintain various recreation facilities on public lands, including campgrounds, picnic areas, boat launches, etc. Those recreation facilities are provided to meet existing or anticipated demand.

#### Watershed

##### Watershed Management

A variety of methods may be employed to maintain, improve, protect, and restore watershed conditions. Priority will be given to meeting emergency watershed needs due to flooding, severe drought, or fire.

*Resource Management Guidelines*  
*Watershed*

**Water Improvements**

Facilities and structures designed to maintain or improve existing water sources, provide new water sources, control water level or flow characteristics, or maintain or improve water quality may be developed. BLM will work closely with the Idaho Department of Water Resources, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other local, State, and Federal agencies to determine appropriate location and designs for such projects.

**Water Rights**

Water rights are administered by the Idaho Department of Water Resources. The Bureau complies with all State of Idaho water laws.

**Wilderness**

**Preliminary Recommendations to Congress**

Only Congress can designate an area wilderness. BLM recommends areas suitable or unsuitable for preservation as wilderness. Those recommendations are preliminary and are subject to the findings of mineral surveys and final consideration by the Secretary of the Interior and the President before being submitted to Congress. Until Congress acts on the President's suitability recommendations, BLM will manage areas recommended as suitable or unsuitable in accordance with the Interim Wilderness Management Policy. After Congress acts, a different policy will apply, depending on whether or not Congress designates an area wilderness.

**Areas Designated Wilderness**

Areas designated wilderness by Congress will be managed in accordance with BLM Wilderness Management Policy. Specific management provisions will be formulated in a wilderness management plan developed for each area following designation.



## *General Provisions for Multiple Use and Transfer Areas*

### **Areas Not Designated Wilderness**

Areas determined by Congress to be nonsuitable for wilderness will be managed for other purposes. A tentative management scheme developed during the planning process will be given final consideration following Congressional action on the President's suitability recommendations.

### **Control of Noxious Weeds**

BLM will control the spread of noxious weeds on public lands and eradicate them where possible and economically feasible. BLM Districts will work with their respective County governments to monitor the location and spread of noxious weeds and to maintain up-to-date inventory records.

Where weed control is warranted, the Bureau will consider alternatives including herbicide applications, plow and seed, burn and seed, livestock grazing strategy, and biological controls. Coordination with adjoining landowners will be pursued if appropriate. If herbicide application is selected as the preferred method of control through the NEPA process, application will be made through the Idaho State Director to the BLM Director in Washington D.C. This application will indicate all pertinent data including chemicals, rate, and method of application and target plant species. Herbicide applications will be applied under the direction of a Licensed Pesticide Applicator and every effort will be taken to ensure public safety.

In addition to control efforts, a weed prevention program is under way to prevent the introduction and establishment of specific weed species in areas not currently infested.

## **GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR MULTIPLE USE AND TRANSFER AREAS**

Resource management plans in Idaho establish multiple use and transfer areas in the planning area. Multiple use and transfer areas are used to:

1. Clearly distinguish retention and transfer decisions;
2. Provide a geographic basis for presenting land use decisions;
3. Help ensure consistency and uniformity in Idaho RMPs; and
4. Indicate the level of resource protection, management, use, and development provided for on the public lands.

## *General Provisions for Multiple Use and Transfer Areas*

All public land in the Monument Planning Area was categorized into one of the following multiple use or transfer areas. These categories reflect the general intent of the management decisions made for the included areas. More site-specific categories were established within those discussed below for each alternative. These site-specific categories are discussed in the description of each alternative later in this chapter.

### Limited Use Areas

Limited use areas are designated where legal and policy constraints necessitate stringent environmental control. These areas will be managed for protection of sensitive and significant wildlife habitat, scenic values, cultural resources, watershed and other resources, or areas preliminarily recommended as suitable for wilderness.

Because these areas involve relatively greater environmental constraints than other areas of public lands, special attention will be given to finding appropriate locations for potentially conflicting uses. Generally, lower intensities of use are required under carefully controlled conditions to protect and preserve the values found in these areas. Public lands in a limited use area will be retained in Federal ownership.

### Moderate Use Areas

Moderate use areas are generally suitable for a wide range of existing and potential uses and will be managed for production and use of their forage, timber, minerals and energy, recreation, or other values. Where conflicts occur with resources or uses, full consideration of all benefits and costs will be taken into account in resolving such conflicts. Sensitive and significant values will always be protected consistent with Federal and State law. Public lands in a moderate use area will be retained in Federal ownership.

### Intensive Use/Development Areas

These areas will generally be managed for a major or large-scale intensive use/development such as a major campground, ORV area, mine, or public utility installation. No intensive use/development areas would be established in the Monument RMP.

*Alternatives Eliminated From Consideration  
Restore and Maintain High Ecological Condition*

Transfer Areas

Transfer areas are the only areas which may be transferred out of Federal ownership under this plan. Public lands declared eligible for transfer by their inclusion in this category are subject to detailed consideration prior to the final decision regarding transfer. Transfer areas are delineated in response to specific demands and needs identified during the planning process, such as agricultural development, community expansion, and other transfers, including transfer to the State of Idaho. Transfer areas will be managed on a custodial basis until transferred from Federal jurisdiction. New public investments in these lands will generally be kept to a minimum.

ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED FROM CONSIDERATION

Two alternatives were considered but not developed for analysis in this EIS. They do not pass the alternative screening standards in Section Two, VI.C.4. of the Idaho RMP Guidebook.

Maximum Grazing

The goals of this alternative would be to improve the range, establish grazing systems, adjust seasons-of-use, and produce the maximum amount of livestock forage possible without depleting the basic production capability of the soils. This alternative was eliminated from consideration because (1) future funding will not likely allow this amount of range improvement, and (2) given the amount of nonuse by grazing permittees, the demand for this large amount of forage probably doesn't exist at this time.

Restore and Maintain High Ecological Condition

*This alternative is not considered technically feasible. The competitive nature of cheatgrass and the cheatgrass/fire interrelationship are discussed in more detail on pages 3-3 and 3-12. Quantities of suitable native seed are limited, their cost is high, and seed viability is low. The predominance of cheatgrass, the frequent wildfires, and the lack of viable native seed precludes further consideration of this alternative.*

Alternatives Eliminated From Consideration  
Maximize Wildlife Populations

Maximize Wildlife Populations

"Maximum wildlife populations" may be obtained for different species under different land management prescriptions. For example, additional farm land development can increase pheasant populations, but to the detriment of animal species dependent on native habitat.

Re-establishment of wildlife at or near pre-grazing levels is unfeasible. Suitable native plant communities cannot be feasibly established. Past agricultural development has destroyed what was once big game critical winter range. These factors are discussed on page 3-3. For these reasons, this alternative was eliminated from consideration.

Remove Imprints of Human Use and Exclude All Uses That Affect Natural Values

This alternative was considered but eliminated from detailed analysis because it is not considered feasible. The predominance of cheatgrass, a human-caused condition, cannot be feasibly removed and replaced with natural vegetation communities. Removal of livestock developments such as troughs, wells, and fences implies the removal of livestock. As discussed for Sub-Alternative D on page 4-53, this would double the average area burned each year, further aggravating the cheatgrass dominance because of the cheatgrass/fire interrelationship. Removal of roads from the planning area would remove fuel breaks that are used to suppress wildfires. Removal of all uses affecting naturalness would not adequately provide for multiple use. Much of the local economy is based on use of the public lands.

Other Alternatives

Several other alternatives were considered but eliminated because they represented only small variations in resource uses and impacts, and because they did not add significantly to the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in detail. These included alternatives with land transfer proposals between those of Alternatives C and D, other livestock stocking levels, and other combinations of livestock grazing/wilderness, ORV use/soil erosion, land transfer/livestock grazing, and land transfer/wildlife habitat.